BLOCKWORK Neighborhood Improvement Program to Promote Community Stewardship in Salisbury

Salisbury, NC – October 12, 2011_The City of Salisbury, the Community Appearance Commission's Neighborhood Leaders Alliance (NLA), and the Rowan County United Way will sponsor a BLOCKWORK Neighborhood Improvement Program on Saturday, October 22 from 8 am – 4 pm. A grass-roots program, BLOCKWORK is designed to bring community supporters together to promote cleaner and safer neighborhoods – one block at a time. The program is funded by grants from the Margaret C. Woodson Foundation, the Blanche & Julian Roberson Foundation, and individual property owners.

Mayor Susan Kluttz, speaking on behalf of the Salisbury City Council said, "The BLOCKWORK Neighborhood Improvement Program is a wonderful way to promote a sense of pride and distinctiveness in our neighborhoods. By working together to improve Salisbury, one block at a time, we foster a spirit of community and teamwork. I look forward to participating on October 22 with some of my fellow council members. Together, we truly can make a difference!"

To compete for an intensive workday with volunteers, local neighborhood leaders submitted applications for the block of their choice. Upon review of all applications, the selection committee chose the 300 block of South Shaver Street for demonstrated need, potential impact, and project feasibility. The 200 block was also added at the request of the Brooklyn South Square Neighborhood team leaders.

To prepare for the project, block captains and city staff have met with Shaver Street property owners to evaluate needs and to design work plans. Projects include exterior repairs like painting, porch restoration, picket fence installation, and sidewalk and landscaping work. Work plans include a preliminary and a post-education phase. City representatives, United Way staff, and block captains have recruited crew leaders to direct specific projects and help finalize work plans. Approximately 75 neighborhood and community volunteers will provide labor for up to 12 separate work crews on October 22. Property owners and residents will participate on work crews and contribute to the purchase of materials if able.

Senior Planner Lynn Raker shares, "The NLA is committed to improving the appearance and safety of neighborhoods as well as building understanding, accountability, and commitment for ongoing maintenance among owners and residents. The BLOCKWORK goal is to incrementally reduce the number of neglected houses by building a positive

community approach to neighborhood stewardship." Raker notes that the date of October 22 was selected so that work projects would occur on the nationally recognized *Make a Difference Day*. Raker said, "Created by USA WEEKEND Magazine, *Make a Difference Day* is an annual celebration of neighbors helping neighbors. To date, millions of projects have been accomplished in hundreds of towns. No special work experience is required by volunteers, just a strong willingness to make a difference in your local community." To volunteer for BLOCKWORK participation, individuals 16 years or older should contact Raker by October 17 at 704-638-5235 or via email at lrake@salisburync.gov.

The City of Salisbury is an equal opportunity employer with over 180 different job classifications and more than 400 full-time positions. For more information regarding the City of Salisbury and its services and departments, please visit us on the web at www.salisburync.gov. To receive updates regarding local initiatives, meetings, programs, and events, please join the City of Salisbury's Facebook users group at www.salisburync.gov/facebook or follow us on Twitter at http://twitter.com/CitySalisburyNC.

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